INCOMING TELEGRAM **Department of State** ACTION COPY

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Action
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Control: 8293
Rec'd: June 16, 1954
10:21 p.m.

FROM: Guatemala City

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TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1012, June 16, 5 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
JUN 17 1954

PRIORITY

Although Guatemala City remained superficially quiet, unconfirmed reports of clashes between armed supporters of Castillo Armas and Guatemalan Army units near Mazatenango were rife and commercial airlines considered suspending service because of government interference with their radio facilities.

According to Heckathorne, PAA station manager, about six o'clock last night large number of cars appeared on far side of airport from passenger terminal escorting official car of President Arbenz. Various suitcases and packages were unloaded from car. About same time authorities ordered all airline radio services suspended. After reporting to PAA manager Wilson in town, Heckathorne was prevented from returning to his office by soldiers guarding airport. Through good offices Colonel Mendizabal, captain of port, Heckathorne contacted Colonel Giron, Chief of Air Force, but Giron confirmed that no one could be admitted. Around eleven two Guatemalan Air Force AT-6s took off escorting DC-3; former returned later but DC-3 had not returned by two a.m. At six this morning radio blackout was lifted, but PAA and TACA hesitated resume flights until assured by high officials their radio will not be interrupted while planes approaching field.

While elaborate precautions would seem indicate departure some very important personage, Embassy has no information other than that Mrs. Arbenz was in town today and President was reported meeting with cabinet.

Rumors of disturbances in area between Mazatenango and Escuintla followed reports yesterday that arms had been parachuted from opposition aircraft there. Though unverified, they illustrate current frame of thinking. One version said ten were killed and twenty wounded when army attempted to seize arms destined for opposition.

Bands of peasants are stopping and searching cars and trucks on highways, presumably for arms. One traveler reported them polite but firm; they allowed car to proceed when search completed. Many planters are bringing families to Guatemala City because of disturbed conditions in countryside.

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